

Department of Veterans Affairs

ORGANIZATIONAL BRIEFING BOOK

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Prepared by the Office Administration
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	<u>Page</u>
Overview of the Department of Veterans Affairs	1
The Veteran	2
Budget Summary	3
Organizations of the Department of Veterans Affairs	4
 LINE ORGANIZATIONS	
Veterans Health Administration	7
Veterans Benefits Administration	9
National Cemetery Administration	13
 STAFF ORGANIZATIONS	
Inspector General	15
General Counsel	16
Board of Veterans' Appeals	18
Board of Contract Appeals	20
Special Assistant to the Secretary	21
for Veterans Service Organizations Liaison	
Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization	22
Center for Minority Veterans	23
Center for Women Veterans	24
Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication	25
Assistant Secretary for Management	26
Office of Budget	26
Office of Finance	26
Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management	28
Office of Asset Enterprise Management	29
Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology	30
Office of Information and Technology	
Office of Policy and Program Assistance	31
Office of Telecommunications	32
Office of Cyber Security	33
Austin Automation Center	35
Office of Information Technology Support Service	35
Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning	36
Office of Policy	36
Office of Planning and Evaluation	37

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STAFF ORGANIZATIONS (Cont.)	<u>Page</u>
Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration	38
Office of Diversity Management & EEO	38
Office of Security and Law Enforcement	39
Office of Administration	39
Office of Human Resources Management	40
Office of Resolution Management	40
Office of Labor-Management Relations	40
Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs	42
Office of Public Affairs	42
Office of White House Liaison	43
Office of Intergovernmental Affairs	43
Office of National Programs and Special Events	44
Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs	45
Office of Legislative Affairs	45
Office of Congressional Affairs	45



OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), established as an independent agency under the President by Executive Order 5398 on July 21, 1930, was elevated to Cabinet level on March 15, 1989 (Public Law No. 100-527).

The Department's mission is to serve America's veterans and their families with dignity and compassion and to be their principal advocate in ensuring that they receive medical care, benefits, social support, and lasting memorials promoting the health, welfare, and dignity of all veterans in recognition of their service to this Nation.

VA is the second largest Federal Department and has over 235,000 employees. Among the many professions represented in the vast VA workforce are physicians, nurses, counselors, statisticians, architects, computer specialists, and attorneys. As advocates for veterans and their families, the VA community is committed to providing the very best services with an attitude of caring and courtesy.

VA comprises a Central Office (VACO), which is located in Washington, DC, and field facilities throughout the Nation administered by its three major line organizations: the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA).

Services and benefits are provided through a nationwide network of 163 hospitals, 849 outpatient clinics, 137 nursing home care units, 43 domiciliaries, 206 readjustment counseling centers, 57 veterans benefits regional offices, and 119 national cemeteries.

The Secretary identified five broad strategic goals for VA to focus on as the means to improve services to veterans and their families and to improve management in the Department. These goals are the components of the VA Strategic Plan:

- Restore the Capability of Disabled Veterans to the Greatest Extent Possible and Improve Their Quality of Life and That of Their Families.
- Ensure a Smooth Transition for Veterans from Active Military Service to Civilian Life.
- Honor and Serve Veterans in Life and Memorialize Them in Death for Their Sacrifices on Behalf of the Nation.
- Contribute to the Public Health, Socioeconomic Well-Being and History of the Nation.
- Provide One VA World-Class Service to Veterans and Their Families Through the Effective Management of People, Technology, Processes, and Financial Resources.

THE VETERAN

NUMBERS: The estimated veteran population living in the United States and Puerto Rico was 25,038,500 as of September 30, 2001. This included 8,221,000 Vietnam era veterans, now the single largest period-of-service component of the veteran population, representing 33 percent of all veterans. World War II veterans comprised the second largest component, numbering 5,032,600 (20 percent of the total). Korean conflict participants totaled 3,769,300 (15 percent), Gulf War era veterans 3,096,000 (12 percent), and World War I veterans 2,200 (less than 0.1 percent). About 6,172,500 veterans (25 percent) served only during peacetime. [The sum of the numbers cited does not add to the total because 938,600 veterans (4 percent) served in two war periods and 158,200 veterans (0.6 percent) served in three.]

AGE: As of September 30, 2001, the median age of all veterans was 57.7 years. Veterans under age 45 constituted 22 percent of the total, while those aged 45 to 64 represented 41 percent, and those 65 or older were 38 percent of the total.

SEX: Female veterans numbered 1.4 million, representing 6 percent of the total veteran population. About 24 percent of all civilian U.S. males 18 years of age or older were veterans.

FUTURE POPULATION: The veteran population (25.0 million in 2001) is projected to decline to 20.8 million by the year 2010, under currently expected armed forces strength. Veteran deaths are expected to rise from 674,500 in 2001¹ to a peak of 687,300 in 2005². The population of veterans aged 65 or older peaked at 9.6 million in 1999. It will decline but rise again to about 8.5 million in 2013 as the Vietnam era cohort ages. The number of veterans aged 85 or older is expected to increase more than two-fold between 2001 and 2010, from 579,500 to nearly 1.2 million.

EDUCATION AND INCOME: Data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey of March 2000 show that male veterans and nonveterans had nearly the same overall level of educational attainment (12.4 and 11.6 years, respectively). With respect to income, male veterans in general had higher income than male nonveterans. For example, the median personal income of male veterans aged 50 to 59 in 1999 was \$42,400 compared to \$37,900 for male nonveterans of the same age. The median personal income of all male veterans aged 20 or older was about 7 percent higher than male nonveterans of that age; \$30,300 for veterans versus \$28,400 for nonveterans.

¹ For the period October 1, 2001 to September 30, 2002.

² For the period October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006.

POINT OF CONTACT: Robert Klein, Office of the Actuary (008A2), (202) 273-5101.

BUDGET SUMMARY

The Department's budget for FY 2002 was enacted on November 26, 2001. VA's funding for FY 2002 is \$3.2 billion above the FY 2001 enacted level. The following is a breakdown of the enacted FY 2002 appropriations as compared to the FY 2001 enacted level:

(\$ in thousands)	2001 Enacted	2002 Enacted
Medical Programs	\$20,647,797	\$21,768,895
Benefit Programs	26,505,406	28,425,139
Cemetery Programs	109,648	121,169
Construction	361,094	523,080
All Other	273,795	297,115
Total	\$47,897,740	\$51,135,398

Medical programs are funded primarily by three separate appropriations: Medical Care, Research, and MAMOE (Medical Administration and Miscellaneous Operating Expenses). MAMOE funds central office's oversight of the medical system.

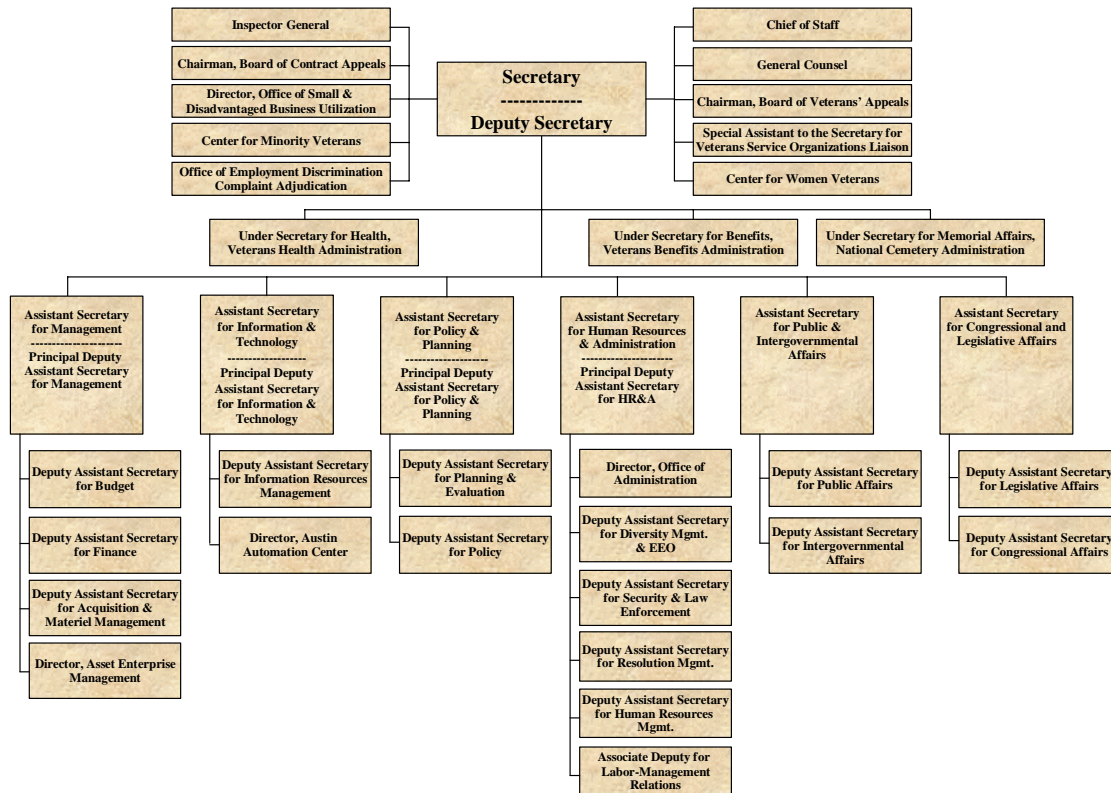
Monetary benefits, cemetery programs, and construction have separate appropriations. Remaining staff functions are funded out of the General Operating Expenses appropriation, except for the Inspector General, which has its own appropriation.

Over half the VA budget, \$27.3 billion, goes out in the form of checks to veterans and their families (disability payments, income support, etc.). This "entitlement" portion of the budget is essentially fixed and is not available for reallocation.

The remaining \$23.8 billion is "discretionary"; VA is assumed to have control of this portion of the budget. However, most such funds (\$21.3 billion out of \$23.8 billion) support the medical care system, which has large fixed costs not subject to ready manipulation.

POINT OF CONTACT: Marie Pringle, Office of Budget (041C/D), (202) 273-5266.

ORGANIZATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



The **Secretary of Veterans Affairs** is responsible to the President for the administration of veterans' affairs, implementation of the laws that govern the Department and is vested with full authority to operate the Department. The Secretary establishes basic policies governing Department operations, basic organizational structure, interpretation of laws pertaining to veterans' affairs and long-range plans, and the development and maintenance of favorable relations with organizations, groups, and individuals interested in veterans' affairs. As a member of the President's Cabinet, the Secretary is the chief advisor to the President on veterans' affairs.

The **Deputy Secretary** shares all the responsibilities of the Secretary and, on a day-to-day basis, directs the policy and operations of the Department. The Deputy Secretary also provides broad direction to the Department staff offices, ensuring coordinated action and conformance with the Secretary's directives.

Administrations and Key Offices: The Department includes 3 administrations that provide for the delivery of services and benefits, 6 Assistant Secretaries, 4 Principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries, 14 Deputy Assistant Secretaries who advise and support the Secretary and the administrations, and 9 Departmental offices that provide specific assistance to the Secretary.

The three administrations are the **Veterans Health Administration**, **Veterans Benefits Administration**, and **National Cemetery Administration**. The head of each administration reports to the Secretary through the Deputy Secretary.

These administrations give centralized program direction to field facilities that provide diverse program services to veterans and their families. Further, each administration has Central Office components that support the administration's operations. This organizational structure reflects a basic management approach of centralized policy direction, complemented by consistent decentralized execution.

Of the nine offices reporting directly to the Secretary or Deputy Secretary, eight are required by law to do so: **Office of Inspector General**, **Office of General Counsel**, **Board of Contract Appeals**, **Board of Veterans' Appeals**, **Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization**, **Center for Minority Veterans**, **Center for Women Veterans**, and the **Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication**. The ninth, Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) Liaison, provides advice to the Office of the Secretary on matters affecting VSOs and is responsible for the Department's day-to-day liaison with those organizations.

Assistant Secretaries: The Assistant Secretaries serve as the principal staff advisors to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary and oversee or administer programs in their respective areas of responsibility.

The **Assistant Secretary for Management** serves as the Department's Chief Budget Officer, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and Senior Procurement Executive. The Assistant Secretary is responsible for financial management, budget administration, and resources planning, and serves as the Department's principal advisor for budget, fiscal and capital policy. As the Department's Senior Procurement Executive, the Assistant Secretary is responsible for VA's acquisition system and materiel management activities. With the establishment of the Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM), the Assistant Secretary supports the Strategic Management Council with regard to implementing the capital asset planning process.

The **Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology** serves as the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the Department. As the CIO, the Assistant Secretary is the principal advisor to the Secretary on matters relating to information and technology management in the Department as delineated in Public Law No. 104-106, the Clinger-Cohen Act; the Paperwork Reduction Act, Chapter 35 of title 44 United States Code; and any other associated legislated or regulatory media.

The **Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning** is responsible for the Secretary's policy analysis and planning processes and their integration into the Department's Strategic Management Process. The Assistant Secretary's functions entail responsibility for performing Department-level policy analyses and development, cost-benefit analyses, strategic planning, quality improvement, actuarial studies and assessments, veterans' demographics, and statistical analyses. The Assistant Secretary is VA's liaison

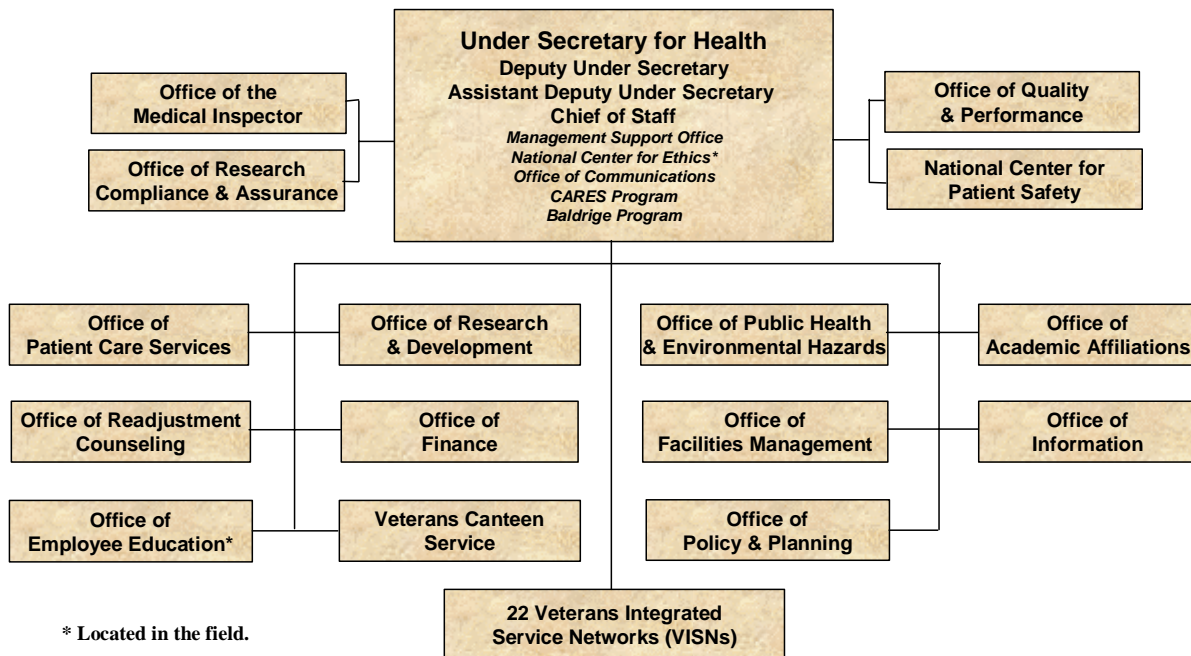
to the National Performance Review and is the focal point for VA efforts to reinvent government. The Assistant Secretary is responsible for the Nation's official estimates and projections of the veteran population and the only National Survey of Veterans.

The **Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration** is responsible for providing direction and oversight to a diverse group of programs and serves as the Department's principal advisor on related matters. These programs, all with VA-wide responsibilities, include human resources management, diversity management and equal employment opportunity, discrimination complaint resolution, security and law enforcement, labor-management relations, and general administrative support (primarily services to VACO). The Assistant Secretary serves as the Department's Designated Agency Safety and Health Official and is responsible for administration of the Occupational Safety and Health and Workers' Compensation Programs. The Assistant Secretary also oversees the Office of White House Liaison and Special Projects and the Shared Service Center, which is located in Topeka, Kansas.

The **Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs** is responsible for the coordination and dissemination of VA-related information to various audiences, specifically veterans and associated service organizations, and to the general public through the news media. The Assistant Secretary manages and directs the Department's intergovernmental, consumer affairs, and homeless programs. The office supports veterans specific interest groups, special events, and program activities to meet the needs of several audiences – first and foremost veterans.

The **Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs** serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary concerning all legislative and congressional liaison matters and has overall responsibility for the plans, policies, goals, and direction of the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs. The Assistant Secretary is the principal coordinator of VA's legislative program development, ensures Departmental compliances with congressionally mandated reports and serves as the point-of-contact with the General Accounting Office.

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION



VA provides medical care to eligible beneficiaries as authorized by Title 38, U.S.C. The branch of VA that administers and operates this medical care system is the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). VHA operates the Nation's largest integrated health care system providing care to 3.8 million unique patients with over 717,000 patients treated and 39.2 million outpatient visits in 2000.

To carry out its mission to provide medical care, VHA operated (as of September 2001) 163 hospitals, 849 outpatient clinics, 137 nursing homes, 43 domiciliaries, and 206 readjustment counseling centers including facilities in several categories in every state, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Republic of the Philippines, and Guam. VHA also finances health care for some veterans in other government or private facilities (including physician offices, hospitals, and nursing homes) and, under limited circumstances, finances care for dependents and survivors of veterans as well.

In addition to providing health care, VHA also has missions to provide training for health care professionals; to conduct medical research; to serve as a contingency backup to Department of Defense (DOD) medical services; and, during national emergencies, to support the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS).

During the past 6 years, one of the most profound transformations of any organization in U.S. history has happened at VHA. Replacing an older, top-down organization, VHA has made a profound shift in management philosophy and execution. Beginning in 1995, VHA restructured its management system from one in which a small number of

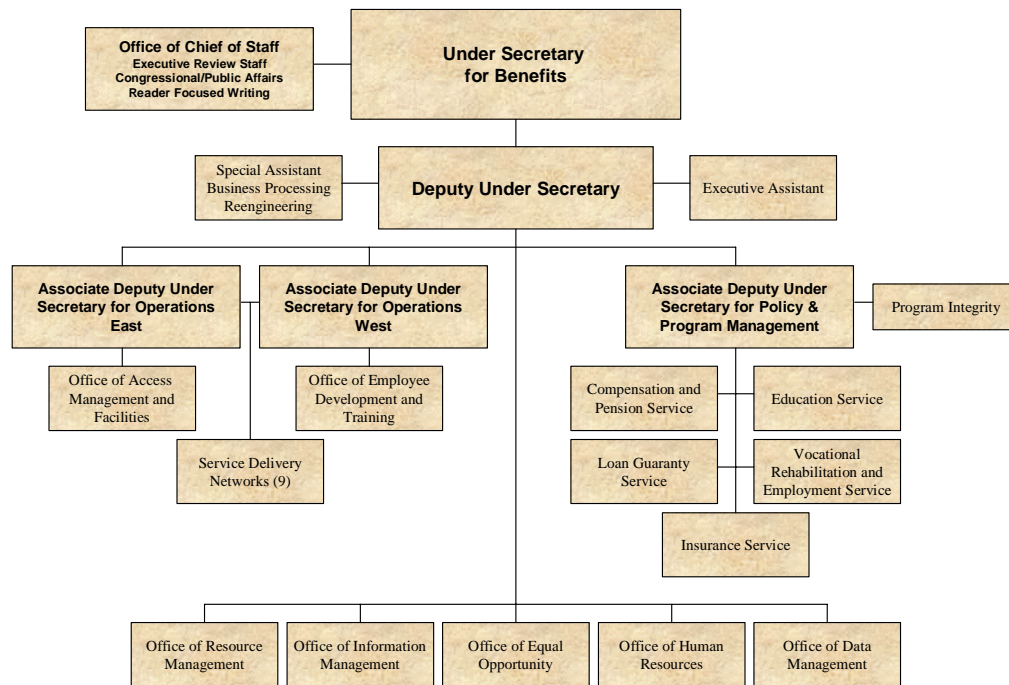
regional directors remotely supervised numerous, complex field activities to one in which 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks or VISNs provide close and continuing “hands on” supervision and leadership to local VA providers of care. The current, restructured veterans’ healthcare system requires a data-driven, process focused customer orientation. Its goal is to deliver the right care at the right time in the right place. Moving from a hospital-based to a predominately outpatient system, that ratio of outpatient visits to inpatient admissions went from 29:1 in 1995 to 67:1 in 2000.

To assure this focus, VHA has redesigned systems including those for allocating resources, managing information and strategic planning. The new structure for planning, budgeting, service delivery is the VISN, a network of facilities with a collective responsibility to coordinate care and maximize the health potential of a population of veterans. This has enabled the realignment of responsibility and accountability closer to the point of care delivery. In addition, a performance measurement system, including contracts or performance agreements with VHA's top managers, assures the alignment of action with organizational goals and alignment of all levels of the organization toward achievement of the goals.

Along with these structural changes, VHA has fostered new strategic goals that will move it forward within its domains of value: quality, satisfaction, functional status, and cost. Based on these goals, VHA has emerged as a national leader in providing a coordinated continuum of care, at an increasingly predictable and consistent level of care, and characterized by the achievement of performance outcomes in terms of cost, access, customer satisfaction, and improved patient care. VHA has made substantial progress in establishing a patient-centered, community-based health care system delivering accessible quality care. Always striving for improvement, VHA is moving in these directions so that the veterans' health care system can continue to provide high quality health care to our nation’s veterans.

POINT OF CONTACT: Robert J. McQueeney, Management Support Office (10A2B), (202) 273-8880

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION



The Veterans Benefits Administration is responsible for administering the Department's nonmedical programs that provide financial and other forms of assistance to veterans, their dependents, and survivors. Major benefits are veterans' compensation, veterans' pension, survivors' benefits, burial benefits, rehabilitation assistance, education benefits, home loan benefits, and insurance coverage.

There are five broad categories of the Compensation and Pension programs:

- **Disability Compensation** is provided to veterans for disabilities incurred or aggravated while on active duty. The amount of compensation is based on the degree of disability. Several ancillary benefits are also available to certain severely disabled veterans.
- **Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)** is provided for surviving spouses, dependent children, and dependent parents of veterans who died of service-connected causes or while on active duty on or after January 1, 1957. Prior to January 1, 1957, death compensation was the benefit payable to survivors.
- **Disability Pension** is provided for veterans with nonservice-connected disabilities who served in time of war. The veterans must be permanently and totally disabled and must meet specific income limitations.

- **Death Pension** is provided for surviving spouses and children of wartime veterans who died of nonservice-connected causes, subject to specific income limitations.
- **Burial Benefits** include service-connected burial allowance for death related to service; nonservice-connected burial and plot allowances when death is not due to service-connected causes; reimbursement of transportation expenses; burial in a national cemetery; and a flag to drape the casket of a deceased veteran.

Education programs administered for veterans, service persons, and eligible dependents:

- **Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty (MGIB)** is the educational assistance program for veterans and service persons, and the **Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR)** is the educational assistance program for members of the Selected Reserve.
- **Dependents' Educational Assistance** is for spouses and children of veterans who died of service-connected causes, who are permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service-connected disability, or who, in the line of duty, are forcibly detained or interned by a foreign power.

Closed Programs and Ancillary Benefits. The following are additional small education programs. Some are either closed to new applicants or are received in addition to the main VA education benefits programs.

- **Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)** is for certain veterans who entered active duty for the first time after December 31, 1976, and before July 1, 1985. This program is closed to new applicants.
- **Section 903, Public Law 96-342, Educational Assistance Pilot Program** is a modified VEAP program. Participation was limited to certain persons who enlisted or re-enlisted between November 30, 1980, and October 1, 1981. The Service Department made the individual's monthly contributions so the veteran didn't have to contribute to the program. Participants could transfer benefits to spouses and children. The program is closed to new applicants.
- **Section 901, Public Law 96-342, Education Assistance Test Program** is a noncontributory test program funded by the Department of Defense. Certain individuals, and in some cases their dependents, receive educational assistance and possibly also a subsistence allowance while training at accredited educational institutions. This program is closed to new applicants.
- **Public Law 99-399, Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986**, referred to as the Antiterrorism Act, provides education benefits to former captives taken during hostile action due to their relationship with the United States. The program also provides for benefits for their family members. Eligible captives

include not only employees of the U.S. government, but also those who provided personal services to the United States – including foreign nationals and resident aliens.

- **Work-Study Allowance Program** offers additional assistance to students in return for their performance of VA-related activities.
- **Tutorial Assistance Program** supplements an eligible student's regular monthly educational assistance allowance by paying an additional allowance for tutoring costs.

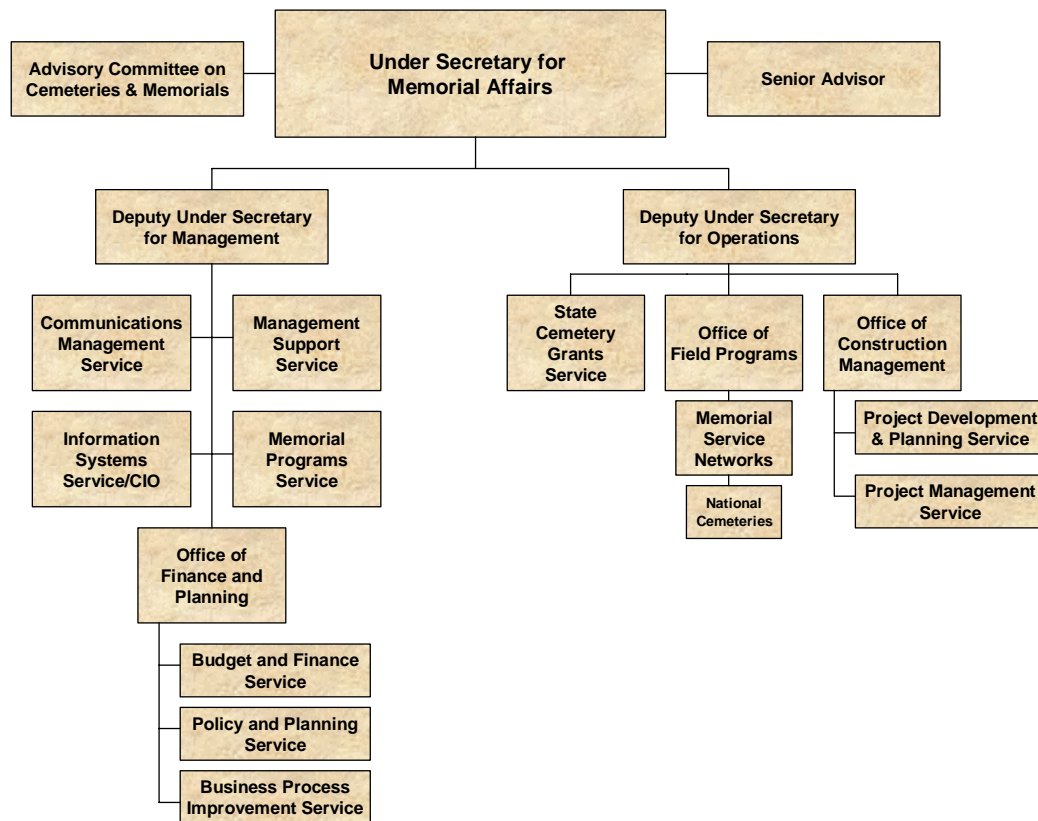
VA also administers program approvals of schools and training establishments wishing to enroll veterans and monitors schools for institutional compliance with Federal laws and regulations. In addition, VA provides contract management for State Approving Agency (SAA) activities. Other programs administered:

- **Home Loan Benefits** is a program designed to encourage and facilitate extension of favorable credit terms by private lenders to veterans for the purchase, loan refinancing, construction or improvement of homes to be occupied by veterans and their families. In addition, great efforts are undertaken to assist veteran-homeowners to retain their homes.
- **Specially Adapted Housing** is a program designed to provide qualified veterans with financial assistance in obtaining housing equipped with special features to accommodate to their service-connected disabilities.
- **Native American Veteran Direct Loan Program** is a pilot program designed to provide direct mortgage loans to eligible Native American veterans for the purchase, construction, or improvement of homes on Federal trust land. Historically, private mortgage financing has been rarely available on Federal trust land. Under this program, VA makes financing available to Native American veterans who are eligible for VA guaranteed loans, but who are unable to purchase a home because there are no lenders willing to make loans on land held in trust by the Federal Government.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Service** is a program designed to assist service-connected disabled veterans to prepare for, find, and keep suitable employment. For those veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe they cannot work, VA offers a program of services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible. These services include a comprehensive evaluation of employment limitations; an analysis of transferable education and work skills and development of an individualized rehabilitation plan which may provide employment services; educational or vocational training; independent living service; or a combination of these benefits.

- **Insurance Coverage** involves supervision of the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) programs for today's service members, reservists and veterans, and administration of five other government life insurance programs for veterans from other periods of service, dating back to WWI.

POINT OF CONTACT: *Jimmy Wardle, Chief of Staff (20A), (202) 273-6761.*

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION



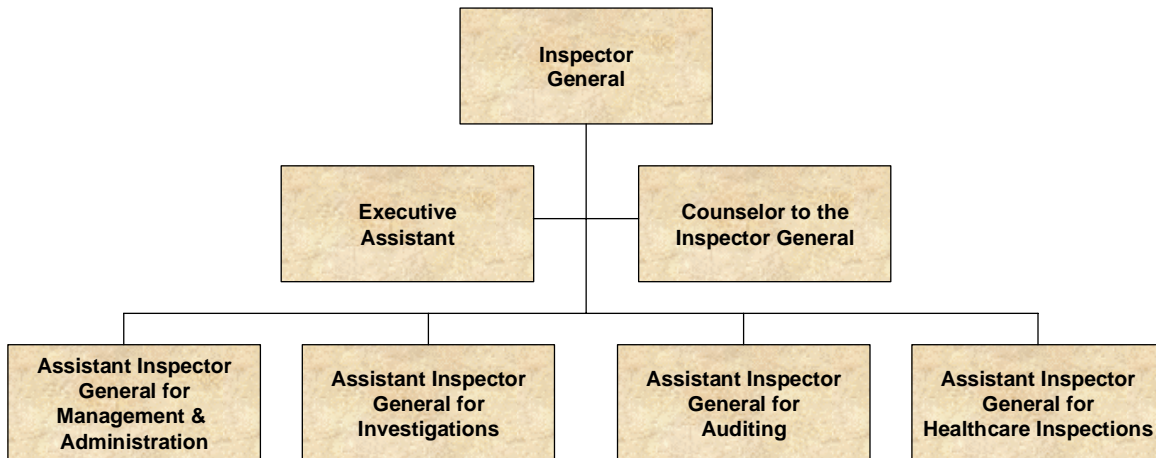
The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) operates 120 national cemeteries in the United States and Puerto Rico, together with 33 soldiers' lots, confederate cemeteries, and monument sites. The mission of the National Cemetery Administration is to honor our Nation's veterans with a final resting place and commemorate their service to our Nation. This mission is accomplished through four major program areas:

- Providing for the interment of eligible service members, veterans, reservists, National Guard members and certain family members in national cemeteries. A total of 84,822 veterans and eligible family members were buried in national cemeteries in FY 2001. More than 2.8 million veterans, spouses, and dependents are buried in the system's 6,851 acres of developed land. NCA maintains these graves and lands as national shrines.
- Providing headstones and markers for the unmarked graves of veterans throughout the United States and the world. In FY 2001, NCA provided 304,296 headstones and markers at a cost of \$24 million. The Government does not provide for the cost of setting the headstone or marker in private cemeteries. In national cemeteries, a headstone or marker is provided, including the cost of placement.

- Administering the State Cemetery Grants Program, which provides financial assistance to States for establishing, expanding, and improving State veterans' cemeteries. Since the program was established in 1978, 109 grants have been made, totaling over \$108 million through FY 2001. The program provides Federal funding up to 100 percent of the cost of establishing, expanding, or improving State veterans cemeteries that complement NCA.
- Providing Presidential Memorial Certificates to veterans' loved ones to honor the service of honorably discharged deceased service members or veterans. In FY 2001, NCA issued 327,561 Presidential Memorial Certificates on behalf of the President.

POINT OF CONTACT: *Rosetta M. Holloway, Administration Service (402D), (202) 273-5185.*

INSPECTOR GENERAL



The Office of Inspector General (OIG) was established in VA on January 1, 1978. The Inspector General Act of 1978 (Public Law No. 95-452), enacted in October 1978, formally established the OIG for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Inspector General Amendments of 1988 (Public Law No. 100-504) established detailed reporting requirements on the resolution and implementation status of issued OIG reports. Public Law No. 100-322 expanded OIG activities to monitor and evaluate VHA Quality Assurance Programs and activities of the Medical Inspector.

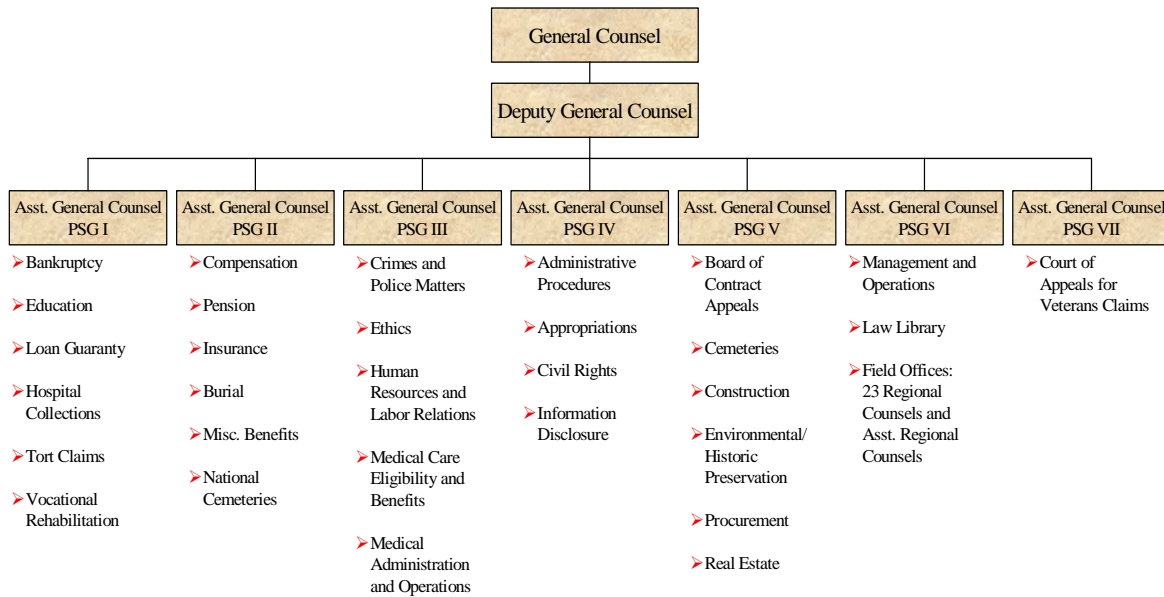
The Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs directs an independent and objective organization. The purpose of this organization is to conduct audits, investigations, and inspections of VA programs, operations, and other activities carried out or financed by VA; to recommend policies that promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness; and to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in VA.

Accomplishments of the Office are described in semiannual reports required by the Inspector General Act. These reports are provided to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Congress, and the Office of Management and Budget.

Operations of the OIG are centrally managed in Washington, DC, and are divided among field offices established for audits, investigations, and health care inspections.

POINT OF CONTACT: Jon Wooditch, Assistant Inspector General for Management and Administration (53), (202) 565-8114.

GENERAL COUNSEL



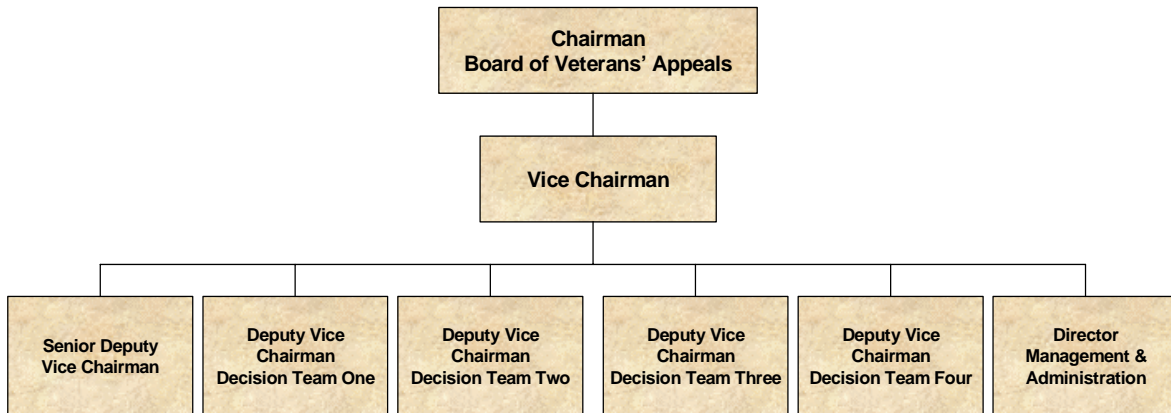
The Office of General Counsel (OGC) assists in the formulation of policy and provides legal advice and services to the Secretary and all organizational components in the Department. The General Counsel serves as the chief legal officer for the Department on all matters of law, litigation, and legislation. The OGC interprets all laws pertaining to the Department and serves as the final legal authority in issuing Departmental regulations that implement laws pertaining to the Department. The OGC represents the Secretary in litigation involving the Department and works in close cooperation with the Department of Justice and the United States Attorneys throughout the country in defending the Department in legal actions brought against it. Working in close cooperation with Department officials, OGC prepares for the Secretary's approval, legislative initiatives for submission to the Office of Management and Budget and the Congress.

At VACO, the responsibility for the full range of legal, litigation, and legislative activities is distributed among seven Professional Staff Groups (PSGs). Each PSG has expertise in specific subject matter areas, and is responsible for providing legal advice to program officials, reviewing proposed regulations and directives, and handling litigation involving VA programs. Each PSG also prepares any draft legislation that is needed in its assigned subject areas. In addition to the PSGs, there is an OGC Office of Regulations Management that works with OMB, the Federal Register, and program officials to ensure that regulatory documents meet legal requirements.

The OGC maintains 23 field offices, each under the supervision of a Regional Counsel. Each Regional Counsel is responsible for providing legal advice and assistance to Directors and other officials of regional offices, VISN Directors and other officials of medical facilities, and officials of readjustment counseling centers and national cemeteries located within the assigned region. The responsibilities of a Regional Counsel include: (1) performing necessary legal review in administrative tort claims and providing appropriate legal service and support to the local U.S. Attorneys' Offices in tort litigation cases; (2) recovering funds owed the United States by aggressively applying legal collection remedies to include conducting litigation in Federal and State courts to effect collection; (3) initiating required court actions in guardianship and commitment matters by appearing in State courts and furnishing legal assistance to appropriate elements of VBA; (4) providing necessary legal services in connection with the loan guaranty program; (5) advising and representing management of VA facilities located within the Regional Counsel's jurisdiction on issues relating to personnel and labor law; (6) providing training to employees of VA facilities within the assigned region; and (7) maintaining liaison with State agencies and legislatures and with State and local bar associations.

POINT OF CONTACT: *Paul Hutter, Office of General Counsel (026A), (202) 273-8660.*

BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS



The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA), a statutory Board created in 1933, makes final decisions on appeals to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under laws affecting the provision of benefits by the Department to veterans, their dependents, or their survivors. The BVA conducts hearings in Washington, DC, and at VA regional offices. The BVA also may review the reasonableness of fee agreements of attorneys or agents for representation of claimants and appellants before the Department, including the BVA. Final decisions of the Board may be appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Appeals in insurance cases involving contracts may be taken into Federal courts after administrative remedies are exhausted.

The Board consists of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Senior Deputy Vice Chairman, four Deputy Vice Chairmen, and sufficient members to conduct hearings and decide appeals in a proper and timely manner. The Chairman serves at the Assistant Secretary level within the Department and is appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, for a term of six years. The other members of the Board, including the Vice Chairman, are appointed by the Secretary, with the approval of the President, based upon recommendations of the Chairman. The Secretary designates one member of the Board as Vice Chairman.

The Board is organized into an Appellate Group, four Decision Teams, and a Management and Administration section. The Appellate Group, headed by the Senior Deputy Vice Chairman, provides legal counsel to the Chairman and serves as BVA's liaison with VA's Office of the General Counsel and the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. The Appellate Group is also responsible for the Board's professional training and quality assurance programs, BVA's research center, and one medical advisor.

Each of BVA's decision teams is headed by a Deputy Vice Chairman, and is comprised of approximately 15 Board members and 60 attorney advisors. Decisions of the Board are rendered by individual Board members or by panels of not less than three Board members. Board counsel assist Board members, review appeals, conduct research, and prepare tentative decisions. Each decision team decides cases from regional offices in one of four geographic regions.

BVA's Management and Administration section is responsible for case management and tracking, docket control, hearing scheduling, correspondence, secretarial and transcription services, information systems management, planning, budgeting, personnel, procurement, and liaison with parties outside BVA.

POINT OF CONTACT: *Marjorie A. Auer, Board of Veterans' Appeals (01A), (202) 565-4275.*

BOARD OF CONTRACT APPEALS

The Board of Contract Appeals is a statutory, quasi-judicial tribunal that hears and decides appeals from decisions of Contracting Officers on claims relating to contracts awarded by the Department of Veterans Affairs, or by any other Agency when such Agency or the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy has designated the Board to decide the appeal. The Board consists of six Administrative Judges assisted by a legal and administrative support staff.

The Board's workload is composed principally of appeals arising under construction contracts, and its jurisdiction includes applications for attorney fees and expenses under the *Equal Access to Justice Act* (5 U.S.C. §504).

Proceedings before the Board are adversarial in nature and are designed to provide due process to the parties. This includes the right to discovery, to a hearing, to cross-examination of witnesses, and to a verbatim record of the proceedings upon which to base an appeal. In conjunction with the Offices of the General Counsel and Acquisition and Materiel Management, the Board also has in place an active alternative dispute resolution program and maintains a docket that uses Board members to dispose of pre-appeal issues in controversy as well as docketed appeals.

Decisions of the Board are final within VA, but may be appealed, either by the Government or by the contractor, to the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

The Board also acts as a trier of material facts in dispute in debarment or suspension proceedings. The Board's Chair was designated VA's Dispute Resolution Specialist pursuant to the *Administrative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Act* (5 U.S.C. §571-584). Among other things, the Chair, members of the Board and staff coordinate the Department's ADR effort; promote the appropriate use of ADR throughout the Department; provide training and assistance to various VA entities in the design and implementation of ADR programs in contracts, discrimination, and other personnel and labor arenas; and represent the Department in various interagency groups including the Interagency ADR Working Group and the Interagency Program for Sharing Neutrals.

The Board is charged with resolving any disputes between drug manufacturers and the Secretary with regard to Pharmaceutical Pricing Agreements Provisions of the *Veterans Health Care Act of 1992* (Public Law No. 102-585).

POINT OF CONTACT: Gloria Brown, Board of Contract Appeals (09), (202) 273-6743.

**SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY
FOR VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS LIAISON**

The Special Assistant to the Secretary for Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) Liaison is the Secretary's primary advisor on matters affecting VSOs and is responsible for the Department's day-to-day liaison with those organizations.

Liaison responsibilities include communicating regularly with VSO officials to ensure VA's responsiveness to the needs of the organizations and their members; attending the VSO Midwinter conferences and National conventions; and communicating with veterans concerning issues they feel strongly about, including health care. The incumbent attends all National Commanders' testimony on veteran's issues to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees. Other responsibilities include articulating the Department's points of view on issues affecting America's veterans; maintaining and publishing lists of VSOs and their representatives for use by VA and the public; advising the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of VSO policy statements or specific positions on veterans' issues; and assisting VSOs in their dealings with other Federal agencies.

POINT OF CONTACT: Allen "Gunner" Kent, Special Assistant to the Secretary (00C), (202) 273-4835.

SMALL AND DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS UTILIZATION

The Director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, serves as the Department's advocate for the participation of small, small disadvantaged, veteran-owned, minority-owned, women-owned, and Historically Underutilized Businesses in VA contracts and subcontracts. This office plans, implements, and coordinates Department programs for small businesses as directed by statutes, Executive Orders, and applicable regulations.

The Director serves as the Department's principal liaison to the Small Business Administration. In matters relating to the Department's socioeconomic acquisition program, the Director is a liaison with the Department of Commerce, the General Services Administration, and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy.

Activities in the program include training acquisition officials, sharing acquisition information with service organizations, counseling entrepreneurs, participating as small business experts at conferences, and disseminating pamphlets that describe how to do business with the Department. This office ascertains the effectiveness of current policy, procedures, and plans in promoting socioeconomic programs for application throughout VA. This office also negotiates, establishes, and maintains the Department's procurement goals for each program, and monitors and reports on the progress toward accomplishing these goals.

In response to Public Law No. 106-50 "Veteran Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999" this office established the Center for Veterans Enterprise. Dedicated in February 2001, the Center provides assistance to veterans and service-disabled veterans who want to open or expand a business. The Center works extensively with the Small Business Administration, the Association of Small Business Development Centers, the Procurement Technical Assistance Centers in the Department of Defense, the Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service, and government and corporate buying activities. Principal functions of the Center include case management, community education and outreach programs, policy and legislative initiatives, and research and information management. The Center also supports the Secretary of Veterans Affairs who is a member of the Board of Directors for the National Veterans Business Development Corporation. VA must, by law, annually provide a notice to every business owned by a veteran that assistance is available to help the company move into the Federal marketplace. Additionally, VA must annually provide to every Federal agency a listing of each service-disabled veteran-owned business and the products and services the company provides.

POINT OF CONTACT: *Scott Denniston, Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization (00SB), (202) 565-8124.*

CENTER FOR MINORITY VETERANS

The Center for Minority Veterans is responsible for advising the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on policies and programs affecting minority veterans. The Center is responsible for promoting the use of VA benefits, programs, and services by minority veterans. It also conducts outreach activities, surveys, and conversations with veterans to identify their needs and to minimize or eliminate barriers to their use of VA benefits, programs, and services. The Center also advises the Secretary on medical research initiatives to address the health concerns of the minority veteran community.

The Center's work focuses primarily on five distinct groups of veterans: African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Island Americans.

The Center provides support to the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans. This statutory Committee assesses the needs of minority veterans and reviews programs and services in an effort to determine VA's effectiveness in meeting those needs. The Committee makes recommendations to the Secretary on how VA can better serve minority veterans and improve the administration of benefits and provision of medical care and other services to veterans.

The Center exercises oversight of about 300 minority veterans program coordinators located at regional offices, medical centers, and national cemeteries throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The Center is responsible for training coordinators and assisting them in their efforts to establish and maintain an effective minority veterans' program nationally and at the local level.

POINT OF CONTACT: Charles W. Nesby, Center for Minority Veterans (00M), (202) 273-6708.

CENTER FOR WOMEN VETERANS

The Center for Women Veterans is responsible for advising the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on VA health care services, benefit programs, and all VA policies that may affect women veterans. The Center works closely with the VHA, VBA, and NCA to develop program initiatives, to ensure that women veterans are afforded equal access to all VA benefits and programs, to ensure that VA programs are responsive to the gender specific needs of woman veterans, and to ensure that women veterans' issues are included in the national VA agenda. The Center reviews VA programs and services to ensure directives and policies are "gender neutral," and that they are not inadvertently discriminatory or insensitive to women veterans. Outreach, a primary component of the Center's mission, enhances access for women veterans to information about VA health care and benefits programs and promotes educational activities to improve the sensitivity of VA staff to the gender needs of women veterans.

The Center collaborates with VA Women-Veterans Coordinators at local and regional levels to identify and resolve policy, programmatic, and clinical issues that negatively impact on the care provided to, and services for, women veterans. The Center, through active partnerships with State, county, veterans service organizations, other Federal agencies, and community-based program officials, assures that women veterans' issues and concerns are identified, discussed, and included in program development and implementation.

The Center provides consultation and support to the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans. This statutory Committee assesses VA programs and their responsiveness to the gender needs of women veterans and the effectiveness of program administration and outreach initiatives for women veterans.

POINT OF CONTACT: Irene Trowell-Harris, Center for Women Veterans (00W), (202) 273-6193.

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT ADJUDICATION

The Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA) began operations on February 19, 1998, pursuant to The Veterans Benefits Act of 1997. The Director of OEDCA is required to:

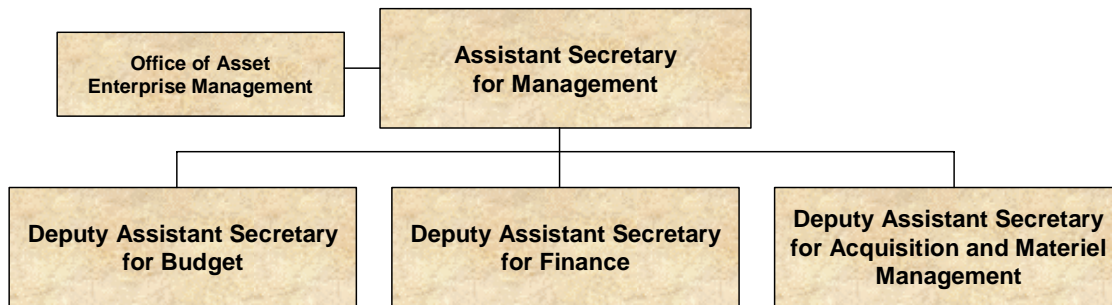
- Issue final agency decisions and orders on the merits of EEO complaints.
- Report any suspected retaliatory or discriminatory action against employees asserting rights under an equal employment opportunity law to the Secretary or Deputy Secretary.

OEDCA is an independent office responsible for issuing final agency decisions and orders on the substantive merits of employment discrimination complaints filed by employees and applicants for employment. In order to avoid a conflict of interest, complaints alleging that the Secretary or Deputy Secretary personally made a decision directly related to the matters in dispute, or were otherwise personally involved in such matters, will be referred for decision-making to another Federal agency pursuant to a cost-reimbursable agreement. Such a referral will not be made, however, when the action complained of relates merely to routine, ministerial approval of selection recommendations submitted to the Secretary by the Under Secretary for Health, Under Secretary for Benefits, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, assistant secretaries, or staff office heads.

Final agency decisions and orders are rendered in a fair and impartial manner and are based on evidence contained in the investigation report and, if applicable, the hearing transcript and exhibits provided by an EEOC-appointed administrative judge. OEDCA is also responsible for determining equitable relief and issuing final agency decisions on a complainant's entitlement to compensatory damages, attorney's fees, and costs where the complainant is a prevailing party. The Director's decisions are not subject to further review or appeal by any official within the Department. Complainants who are dissatisfied with a final agency decision or order may either appeal to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) (or in some cases the Merit Systems Protection Board) or file a civil action in an appropriate United States District Court.

POINT OF CONTACT: *Charles R. Delobe, Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (00D), (202) 273-9461.*

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT



The Assistant Secretary for Management oversees all resource requirements, the development and implementation of agency performance measures, and financial management activities relating to VA programs and operations. Responsibility also includes a Departmental accounting and financial management system that provides for management, cost, budgeting, and accounting information. In addition, the office oversees the Department's acquisition and materiel management activities, including development and implementation of policies and regulations.

OFFICE OF BUDGET

The Office of Budget is responsible for overseeing VA budget formulation, analyzing resource requirements, and preparing and justifying budget submissions, and representing VA in budget deliberations with Congress and the Office of Management and Budget. This office also monitors the financial execution of the budget, and the development and implementation of performance measurements as defined in the Chief Financial Officer Act as well as the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. Budget execution includes examining actual expenditures and performance with the approved operating budget plan.

OFFICE OF FINANCE

The Office of Finance is responsible for continually improving the quality of the Department's financial services. It maintains stewardship of Departmental resources and provides financial information on appropriations and general, revolving, special, and deposit funds for cost and obligation accounting. The Office of Finance establishes financial policy, systems and operating procedures for all Department financial entities, and provides guidance on all aspects of financial management.

The Office of Finance has undertaken two major electronic systems initiatives to support Departmental business processes. The core Financial and Logistics System (coreFLS), which will begin implementation in FY 2003, will provide fully integrated, timely, and easily accessible financial and logistics information to users throughout the Department. Key principles of coreFLS include: utilizing commercial off-the-shelf software with no customization; redesigning business processes to the software; benchmarking the best

of the breed; adhering to VA standards; and instituting as an integrated Department-wide solution. CoreFLS is expected to bring numerous benefits such as reduced reconciliation; increased quality of data; greater knowledge of sharing; single point of data entry; and flexibility to budget and report at multiple levels.

HR LINK\$, a state-of-the-art human resources/payroll system, is replacing the Department's 30-year-old legacy payroll system. The transformation began in March 1998 with the establishment of a Shared Service Center in Topeka, Kansas, followed by implementation of employee self service (ESS) in February 1999. Through ESS, employees have the ability to change over 20 personal and benefits transactions via a computer, touch-tone telephone, and the supporting Interactive Voice Response System. The Management Activities Service (MAS) application is currently in the prototype phase. MAS functionality replaces the manual, paper-based Request for Personnel Action (SF 52) process, enabling managers to request personnel actions and job requisitions online for employees under their direct span of control. Personnel actions are electronically routed through the approval process and then sent electronically to the Shared Service Center for final HR processing. The final phase of HR LINK\$ will include payroll processing.

The Office of Finance is responsible for developing VA's Consolidated Financial Statements and providing external Departmental financial reports to the Department of the Treasury and Office of Management and Budget; establishing uniform standards, policies, classifications, and terminologies to be used throughout the Department in financial and cost reporting; and providing fiscal, accounting and reporting services for the Department.

The Office of Finance also promotes the financial integrity of the Department by performing financial program, systems, internal control and operational reviews. This responsibility encompasses assessment of adherence to financial policies, internal control weaknesses, nonconformance and security issues for VA's financial systems and all other systems interfacing with these systems; the Medical Care Cost Recovery Program; VAMC, VARO and VA Financial Services Center financial operations; and compliance with Automated Information System Life Cycle documentation standards. The Office recommends corrective actions for resolving deficiencies and monitors improvements.

The Office of Finance also directs and manages the department-wide travel program, and analyzes and oversees the Medical Care Cost Fund's performance, effectiveness, timeliness, accountability, and improvements efforts; financial operations at Central Office and the Financial Services Center in Austin, TX; and debt collection services provided by the Debt Management Center in St. Paul, MN.

The Office of Finance oversees the management and direction of VA's Franchise Fund. It is comprised of the following six business lines (Enterprise Centers): Austin Automation Center; Debt Management Center; Financial Services Center; Law Enforcement Training Center; Security and Investigations Center; and VA Record

Center and Vault. These Centers are authorized to sell their common administrative services to VA and other Government agencies. The various Enterprise Centers are required to price products at full cost and compete for customers.

OFFICE OF ACQUISITION AND MATERIEL MANAGEMENT

The Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management (OA&MM) operates the largest Federal procurement and supply system outside the Department of Defense (DoD). VA's Supply Fund, a self-sustaining, revolving fund authorized by statute, funds all OA&MM activities, the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, and VHA's Logistics Office.

In support of VA's mission, OA&MM serves two fundamental roles:

- Operations: To provide acquisition and materiel management support and Supply Fund financial services for the Administrations and staff offices to fulfill their missions.
- Program Oversight and Stewardship: To ensure VA compliance with acquisition and materiel management laws, regulations, and national policies governing Federal acquisition and property management.

Three major business lines exist within OA&MM—acquisitions, materiel management, and Supply Fund financial services.

The Office of Acquisitions procures goods and services for VA. They award and administer cost-effective national contracts to meet supply and equipment needs of VA facilities around the country. Contracts include medical-related Federal Supply Schedules (with authority delegated by the General Services Administration); blanket purchase agreements; direct delivery (for high-tech medical equipment and systems); centralized purchases; and prime vendor (PV) distribution contracts. VA facilities use PV contracts to purchase pharmaceuticals; medical, surgical, and dental equipment and supplies; information technology equipment and services; nonperishable food items; consulting services; and other health-care items needed to operate the largest health-care system in the Nation.

The Office of Acquisitions also develops Department-wide acquisition policy, manages VA's mandatory acquisition training program, and offers continuing education programs for VA procurement staff around the country. In addition, the office manages VA's Contracting Officer Certification Program and is responsible for warranting all VA contracting officers. To ensure the integrity of VA's acquisition program, the office conducts business reviews of all major contract actions and makes site visits to VA contracting offices.

The Office of Program Management and Operations is responsible for establishing policy and policy oversight of materiel management; warehousing; and supply, processing, and distribution at VA medical centers. The office distributes such items as hearing aids, prosthetic devices and interment flags to VA facilities nationwide, in addition to providing hearing aid repair services. The office designs, prints, and distributes VA forms and publications. Program management responsibility for VA's metric system, value engineering, and environmental programs resides within this organization. They also provide transportation services for supplies and household goods and coordinate a program to acquire and distribute clothing for veterans served by VA's Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program. Other program responsibilities include employee relocation, inspections of x-ray and laundry equipment, recovery and sale of precious metals, and materiel management training.

OA&MM operates and oversees VA's Supply Fund. The Fund offers innovative financial services to its customers. For example, VA organizations and facilities can use the One VA+ Program to extend obligation authority of appropriated funds for up to 5 years beyond the current fiscal year for bona fide needs.

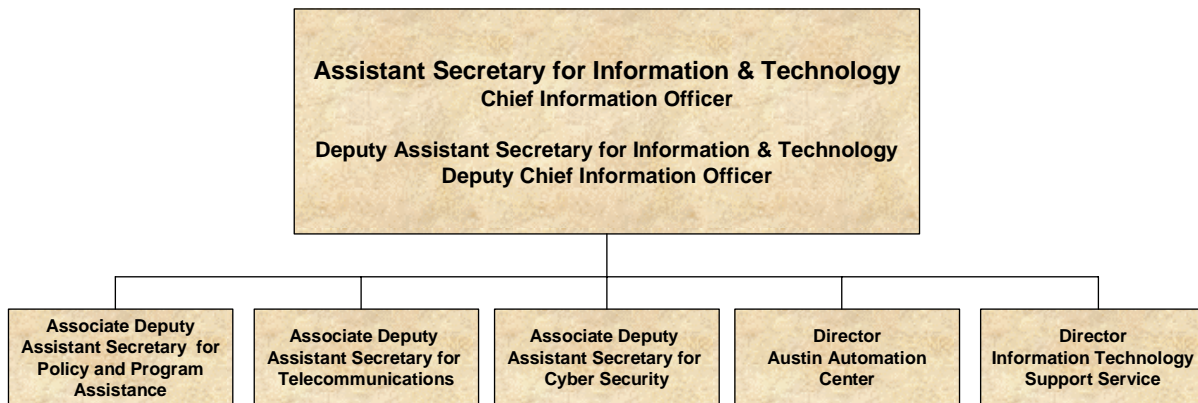
OA&MM partners with other Government agencies to achieve maximum cost avoidance and savings. For example, VA and DoD jointly negotiate purchases of pharmaceuticals and medical and surgical supplies. Future joint purchases will include high-tech, high-cost medical equipment. Additionally, other Federal agencies use VA national contracts in order to take advantage of lower prices and to streamline their acquisition process. OA&MM will continue to expand its outreach efforts.

OFFICE OF ASSET ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT

In July 2001, a corporate capital asset planning office was established – the Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM). OAEM acts as one of the principal policy offices and business advisors to the Assistant Secretary for Management and Deputy Secretary regarding acquisition, management, and disposal of all Department capital assets. OAEM provides oversight in the capital asset arena to ensure a consistent and cohesive Departmental approach to capital asset management by promoting and evaluating the effectiveness of capital asset management policies, principles, standards, and guidelines. This office, in concert with the Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management, is responsible for making recommendations and promulgating Departmental capital asset policies – approved by the Secretary and/or Senior Management Council – that govern the acquisition, management, and disposal of capital assets. OAEM also provides guidance, standards, and technical expertise with respect to individual investments, and develops the Department's long-term Capital Asset Plan and associated Financial Plan. In appropriate cases, OAEM will be responsible for "Departmental asset initiatives," which are precedent setting in the manner by which the Department acquires and manages its capital holdings, or are initiatives identified as high visibility or significance within the Department.

POINT OF CONTACT: *Patti Costello, Office of Management (004A), (202) 273-5583.*

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY



The Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (AS/IT) is the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for VA and is the principal advisor to the Secretary on matters relating to information and technology management in the Department. The Office provides technical direction and guidance to ensure that information technology (IT) is acquired and IT resources are managed for VA in a manner that implements the policies and procedures of the Clinger-Cohen Act and the priorities established by the Secretary. This office oversees the management of VA's cyber security program; IT capital investment planning, execution and financial management programs; VA's primary data processing center; wide area data, local area network management, and telecommunications program; and office automation support services to VACO customers.

The Office is composed of five major organizational elements that report to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (DAS/IT). The DAS/IT reports to the AS/IT. The five major organizational elements are: the Office of Policy and Program Assistance, Office of Telecommunications, Office of Cyber Security, Austin Automation Center, and Information Technology Support Service.

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

In coordination and collaboration with Administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, and other key officials, and as directed by the AS/IT, the DAS/IT serves as the Deputy Chief Information Officer (DCIO) and oversees/facilitates the IT activities of the Department to improve the effectiveness of program operations, and to assist line and staff organizations in the performance of their missions. The DAS/IT advises and assists the AS/IT as directed on matters relating to VA-wide IT responsibilities and functions including policy and budget formulation, planning, acquisition, execution and oversight; internal and external coordination; development and analysis of department level program data; and assessment of VA's IT requirements. (IT includes hardware, software, telecommunications, security, and associated technologies and peripherals.)

The DAS/IT oversees VA's cyber security program; telecommunications program; policy, planning, and execution programs; the Austin Automation Center; and Information Technology Support. The DAS/IT also provides periodic reviews of projects, IT and facilities to assess compliance with policy and plans, use of standards, interoperability and security.

The DAS/IT also oversees the formulation of VA policies pertaining to IT and facilities, data administration, records management, directives management, forms, form letters, correspondence management, mail management, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Privacy Act, data confidentiality, computer matching, and the Data Integrity Board. This individual advises and assists the AS/IT, Administrative heads, and other key officials on the development of plans for and the acquisition of IT and facilities. The DAS/IT oversees the management and development of VA's annual IT planning process. In coordination with all affected IT program offices, the DAS/IT establishes guidelines for the acquisition of IT.

The DAS/IT is responsible for providing the Administrations and other levels of VA management with access to statistical data to be used in budget development, long-range forecasting, policy characteristics of veterans health care programs, and benefits programs. Also the DAS/IT provides data to organizations such as the CBO, Congressional Committees, OMB, veteran's organizations, other Federal agencies, and the public.

ASSOCIATE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLICY AND PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

The Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Program Assistance advises and assists the DAS/IT by formulating and establishing VA-wide policies, plans, guidelines, and standards for IT planning, capital investment, acquisition review, and financial management to promote improvements in the effectiveness of IT in VA and the efficiency of IT planned and operating budgets.

The Office oversees and coordinates VA-wide implementation of IT legislation and guidance, including OMB Circular A-130, Circular A-11, Part 3 and Clinger-Cohen Act. It develops and manages the VA IT Capital Investment Process in accordance with Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 and the OMB Capital Programming Guide and participates on the Capital Investment Panel and supports the Capital Investment Board. This Office develops VA's IT strategic plan, and conducts or directs post implementation reviews on projects, once fully implemented and from a sampling of VA CIO-approved projects. It also tracks and evaluates VA IT budget submissions and budget executions for adherence to and support of VA corporate plans and develops and publishes data for Department use on IT budget trends, acquisition, strategies and return on investment projections, including Exhibit 53 data on IT spending for submission to the OMB.

The Office serves as an IT point of contact with the Inspector General (IG) and the General Accounting Office (GAO) for studies, audits, and reports concerning areas of responsibility. It also coordinates Department-wide responses to GAO and IG report recommendations and monitors implementation of corrective actions as they pertain to areas of responsibility. The Office also provides expert consultant services to VA components and senior officials; ensuring adherence to legislative requirements and meeting the IT needs of the Department. In addition, the Office participates on behalf of the Department in external working groups and partnerships with other Federal agencies and private industry to promote sharing above and beyond corporate boundaries.

The Office administers and develops and recommends Department-wide policies for the following traditional paperwork management programs: delegations of authority; form and form letter management; clearance of information collections; micrographics, records, vital records, mail, correspondence, and reports management. The office also administers the FOIA program, the Release of Names and Addresses (RONA) program, and the computer-matching program. Also, the Office serves as VA's OMB Forms Clearance Officer; Publications Control Officer; Government Information Locator Service (GILS) Program Liaison Officer; the American Technology Preeminence Act (ATPA) of 1991 Scientific, Technology and Engineering Officer; the Secretary for VA's Data Integrity Board (DIB); and the Department's liaison with the Office of the Federal Register on matters pertaining to the distribution of agency copies of the Code of Federal Regulations.

ASSOCIATE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Telecommunications advises and assists the DAS/IT by providing Departmental oversight on all matters pertaining to wide area data network management, local area network management, telecommunications policy, planning and implementation; by managing the Local Area Network supporting the VA Central Office complex, and by managing and operating VA's primary automated data processing center. The Office is responsible for providing effective and reliable services in these areas in support of VA goals to integrate technology and implement innovative management techniques to provide quality care and benefits.

The Office formulates and establishes guidelines for VA-wide acquisition, installation, and management of IT pertaining to these programs. This includes oversight of technical support programs such as design, engineering, implementation, and consultant services. The Office develops strategic and business plans for these programs.

The Wide Area Network program within the Office provides overall management for VA's wide area data communications network, including engineering and oversight of vendor installation and the configuration management of circuits, hardware, and software. It functions as the single technical focal point for interface to wide area (intercity/interstation) telecommunications in VA. The Office provides technical Internet/Intranet expertise to VACO and field stations and maintains currency in Internet/Intranet technology and capabilities and the resulting impact on policy inside and outside VA. The Office also provides for a network operation center that plans and executes an office automation strategy in accordance with existing policies and procedures to use technology to continually improve the delivery of information resources services to VACO computer customers. It provides research and development for the purpose of integrating industry-standard technology to solve specific enterprise problems within OI&T and at VACO. Also, it manages all centralized computer systems, the campus area network, and all associated telecommunications equipment located at VACO.

The Office serves as an IT point of contact with the Inspector General (IG) and the General Accounting Office (GAO) for studies, audits, and reports concerning areas of responsibility. It also coordinates Department-wide responses to GAO and IG report recommendations and monitors implementation of corrective actions as they pertain to areas of responsibility. The Office also provides expert consultant services to VA components and senior officials, ensuring adherence to legislative requirements and meeting the IT needs of the Department. In addition, the Office participates on behalf of the VA in external working groups and partnerships with other Federal agencies and private industry to promote sharing above and beyond corporate boundaries.

ASSOCIATE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CYBER SECURITY

The Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Cyber Security and Chief Security Officer (CSO) is responsible to the DAS/IT for the development, publication, and implementation of Departmental information security policies, standards, and guidance, as well as coordination of all aspects of the Department's information security program which directly supports all of VA's information security objectives. The Office provides management leadership in information security policy and guidance, expert advice, and collaboration among the Administrations and Staff Offices in developing, promoting, and maintaining information security measures to protect adequately and cost effectively sensitive information to meet the Department's current and future business needs. The Office ensures that information security policies, principles, standards, and guidelines are implemented appropriately throughout the Department.

The Office is responsible for formulating and establishing policies and programs for VA's privacy program; cyber security architecture, engineering, and lab testing; operations center and incidence response; certification and accreditation; and critical infrastructure protection. The Office develops and coordinates Departmental policy for information security and cyber security, coordinates overall planning for VA-wide security enhancement initiatives including implementation of firewalls, network intrusion detection, incident response and reporting, public key infrastructure, and related technologies, and provides leadership and management for the Central Incident Response Capability, coordinating all computer security issues, and advising all VA staff on information security issues and concerns.

The Office conducts information security risk assessments, and develops Department-wide directives, standards, and guidelines to assist in the identification and measurement of information security threats and vulnerabilities. It performs information security audits and evaluations and evaluates information systems to ensure compliance with VA's Information Security Program directives and with Federal computer security statutes.

The Office is responsible for referring probable criminal and/or statutory violations of information security to the IG, providing advisory services to information systems planners, and evaluating information systems plans and studies to recommend more adequate information security. The Office ensures compliance with the Computer Security Act of 1987 mandate to provide training in computer security awareness and accepted computer practices for all employees who are involved with the management, use, or operation of each federal computer system within or under the supervision of the Department.

The Office chairs subcommittees and working groups chartered by VA's Information Technology Board (ITB) to advance the Information Security Program and serves as a member of the ITB. The Office serves as liaison with the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the National Security Agency, OMB, GAO, and IG on information security. It serves as the conduit for reports, assessments, responses, and documents entering or leaving the Department that concern information security policies, practices, or findings. In addition, it coordinates representation for key interagency and extra-governmental information security groups to ensure that VA's interests are served, and that information obtained from participating in these groups is shared among all affected organizations within VA.

AUSTIN AUTOMATION CENTER

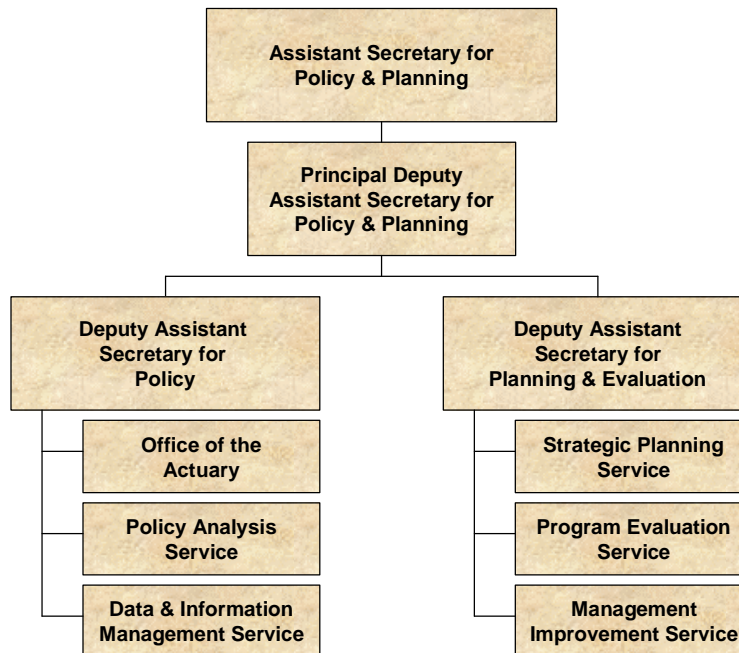
The Director, Austin Automation Center (AAC) reports to the DAS/IT and oversees the AAC by supporting One-VA world-class service to veterans and their families by delivering results-oriented, secure, highly available and cost effective IT services. The IT services are provided to VA and other Federal customers under the Franchise Fund Pilot Program. As a corporate IT center for VA-wide general application systems, over 100 major information systems are processed for VA customers. The applications provide mission critical data for payroll, financial management, human resources, logistics, medical records, eligibility benefits, and supply functions. The AAC also offers a full complement of technical solutions to accommodate customers' varied IT e-government projects. These solutions include platform-hosting services, total information assurance, customer business continuity, data conversion and interfacing, and configuration management. Additionally, the AAC serves as an information telecommunications hub for numerous VA facilities located nationwide and overseas. Customers use AAC services and products to manage their day-to-day business in serving the Nation's veterans, as well as planning for future operations. Manages the VA Records Center and Vault as a Franchise Fund Enterprise Center. (Record storage and related services are provided on a cost reimbursable basis to VA organizations, civilian agencies, and the Department of Defense.)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICE

This Office provides a full range of technical support and staff assistance to customers for the design, engineering, testing, review and installation or modification of telephone systems, including evaluation and follow-on maintenance contracts and voice recognition, voice response and voice and data applications. In addition, it manages the Local Area Network supporting the VACO complex. Also, it provides systems management, office automation, information technology, day-to-day technical operations, customer desktop support for the majority of VACO organizational elements and maintains a specialized technical training facility for the physically challenged. The Office plans and executes an office automation strategy in accordance with existing policies and procedures to use technology to continually improve the delivery of IT services to VACO computer customers. It also conducts research and development for the purpose of integrating industry-standard technology to solve specific OI&T enterprise initiatives within the VACO complex.

POINT OF CONTACT: *Nancy Strouse, Office of Information & Technology (005), (202) 273-5003.*

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLICY AND PLANNING



The Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning oversees, on behalf of the Secretary, certain management activities and processes that require coordination across the Department or which call for the application of a broad perspective. The Office of Policy and Planning facilitates the Department's strategic planning process and implementation of the Government Performance and Results Act; supports the development, analysis, and review of issues affecting veterans' programs; provides quantitative and actuarial analysis to the Department in support of major policy deliberations; serves as the Department's focal point for access to and availability of official data; coordinates the independent evaluation of program performance focusing on program outcomes, service quality, customer satisfaction, and management efficiencies; and fosters management improvement initiatives throughout VA.

OFFICE OF POLICY

The Office of Policy is responsible for providing conceptual, analytical, and informational support throughout the Department. The office collaborates with program officials to identify and analyze strategic questions facing VA and the delivery of veterans' benefits and services. The Office ensures that appropriate information and data are included in the decision-making process – providing actuarial, demographic, economic, statistical and other technical expertise to analyze policy issues for the Department. It develops data and assesses policy considerations of various proposals being considered by the Department, Administration Heads, or Staff Offices and provides recommendations to senior leadership. The Office of the Actuary is responsible for developing operational or administrative information to address such things as long- and short-term trends in

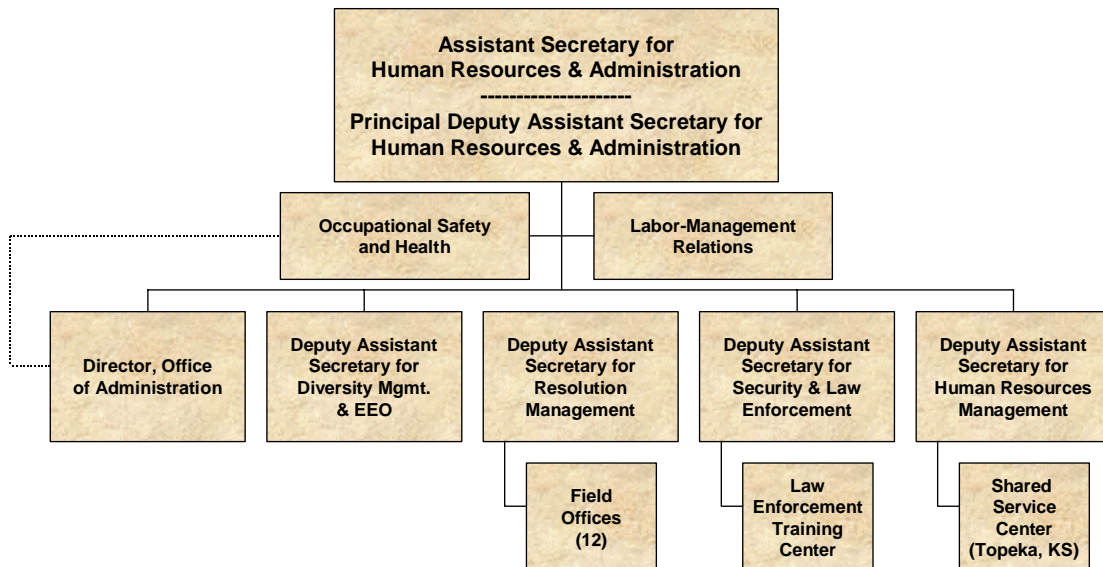
veteran population and workload. The Office also provides actuarial and statistical consulting Department-wide.

OFFICE OF PLANNING AND EVALUATION

The Office of Planning and Evaluation oversees implementation of VA's strategic planning process, including development of the Department's Strategic Plan. It provides conceptual, analytical, and information support to program officials, collaborating on the identification and analysis of strategic questions facing VA and the delivery of veterans' benefits and services. The Office is responsible for implementation of the program evaluation process required under the Government Performance & Results Act (GPRA), measuring the effectiveness of Federal programs against outcome goals and objectives. The Office also serves as the Department's internal coordinator and external liaison regarding strategic plans, management improvement initiatives, organizational assessment and transformation, quality awards, benchmarking, and best practices.

POINT OF CONTACT: Christy Fick, Office of Policy & Planning (008), (202) 273-5032.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION



The Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration (AS/HR&A) provides direction and oversight to six major program areas headed by the Deputy Assistant Secretaries for Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity, Security and Law Enforcement, Human Resources Management, Resolution Management, the Associate Deputy for Labor-Management Relations, and the Director, Office of Administration. With the assistance of these officials, the Assistant Secretary is responsible for directing both policy and operational functions in these program areas. The Assistant Secretary serves as the Department's Designated Agency Safety and Health Official and is responsible for administration of the Occupational Safety and Health and Workers' Compensation Programs.

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity (DM&EEO) advises and supports the Assistant Secretary for HR&A in workforce diversity issues. The office also supports the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretaries, and Assistant Secretaries in their proactive actions to achieve and sustain a diverse workforce.

DM&EEO provides leadership in establishing the Department's diversity policy and in designing, maintaining, and evaluating diversity strategies. It works proactively to enhance the employment of women, minorities, veterans, and persons with disabilities through two main areas: (1) Workforce Analysis and Evaluation, and (2) Complaints Prevention and Special Initiatives.

The Workforce Analysis and evaluation team establishes policies and guidance for achieving diversity and EEO Department-wide through such initiatives as workforce analysis, evaluation, accountability metrics, technical assistance, and ad hoc reporting. Complaints Prevention and Special Initiatives encompass diversity and affirmative employment policy, special emphasis programs, internships, and training and education, among other programs. The DM&EEO's Web site (www.va.gov/dmeeo) offers additional information on diversity-related tools and programs at VA.

OFFICE OF SECURITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Office of Security and Law Enforcement provides advice and assistance on all matters concerning the oversight and training of VA police and security forces. This office manages the VA Law Enforcement Training Center at North Little Rock, Arkansas; conducts inspections of field station police and security units; conducts special investigations regarding drug introductions, property loss, and other crimes; oversees the arming of VA police; and develops policies, instructions, and other guidance for VA police and security forces nationwide. The Office of Security and Law Enforcement is responsible for security oversight of the Department's Central Office facilities and the protection of the Secretary. The Office of Security and Law Enforcement is also responsible for the development of policies and procedures for discharging the Department's responsibilities for national security and emergency preparedness including catastrophic disaster response under the Federal Response Plan, personnel security, and Continuity of Group operations.

The Law Enforcement Training Center (LETC) is responsible for training VA police officers. The LETC oversees monthly in-service training for officers at medical centers and offers supervisory and specialized training programs.

OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION

The Office of Administration provides a wide range of support services, primarily to VACO. Local services include VACO human resource (HR) functions of employment, compensation, employee relations, benefits, career transition, and career development; and the operation of the VACO building as well as administrative support to all VACO employees in satellite locations. Nationwide, the Office of Administration provides guidance and assistance to facilities in their audiovisual needs, the implementation of the transit benefit program, the processing of executive correspondence (White House bulk mail), and protocol matters affecting the Department.

The office serves as Departmental liaison with the National Audio Visual Center and with General Services Administration concerning space acquisition, telephone, and other support functions within the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. The office manages the VACO space inventory, and is responsible for alterations and renovation projects, and serves as the facility site manager for six Washington area locations. It provides the full range of facilities management services to the U.S. Kids Child Development Center.

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The Office of Human Resources Management (HRM) is responsible for advising and assisting the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and other top central office and field officials to meet the established mission, goals, and objectives of the Department through a strategically aligned and customer-focused human resources management program.

OHRM meets the Department's strategic needs by focusing on policy development, workforce planning initiatives, human resources development, legislative changes, and civil service reform. This includes the fundamental human resources functions of staffing (recruitment and retention), classification, compensation, executive resources, workforce planning, employee relations, employee work life and benefits, career transition, and development within the human resources community.

The functions of HRM include liaison with the Office of Personnel Management as well as representing the Department before Congress, the Office of Management and Budget, and other Federal agencies on human resources issues.

OFFICE OF RESOLUTION MANAGEMENT

The Office of Resolution Management (ORM) provides Equal Employment Opportunity discrimination complaint processing services to VA employees, applicants for employment, and former employees. Complaint processing services include counseling, mediation, investigation, and procedural final agency determinations. ORM also provides compliance oversight functions on the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication final agency decisions, appellate Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) decisions, and matters relating to settlements, including breaches. ORM accomplishes these responsibilities through a nationwide network of 12 field offices.

In addition, ORM has oversight responsibility for the Department's external Civil Rights Program, which carries out compliance and enforcement activities in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department.

OFFICE OF LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

The Office of Labor-Management Relations (LMR) is responsible for promoting labor-management cooperation throughout the Department to enable VA's unions and management officials to work as partners in improving the delivery of service to veterans and their families and in creating a positive work environment for employees.

LMR is responsible for promulgating labor-management relations policy and programs for the Department. This includes providing leadership, involvement, and support for establishing and maintaining labor-management partnership councils at appropriate levels in the Department; providing guidance and support for conducting labor-

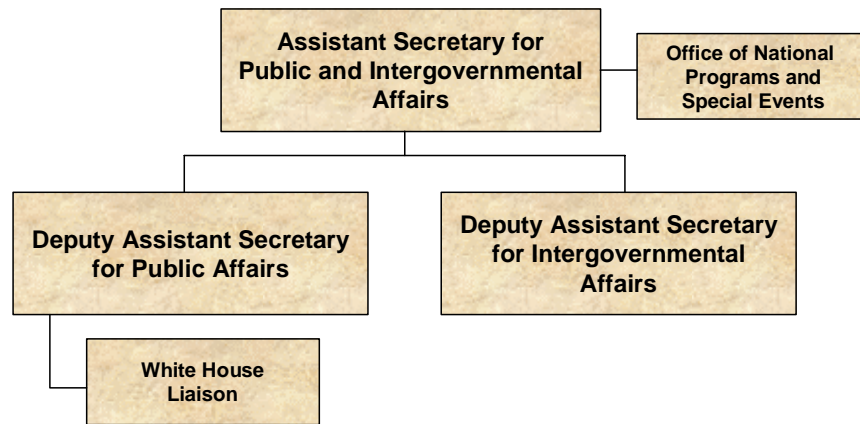
management negotiations; providing contract interpretation guidance over national agreement provisions, and providing help in resolving contract disputes.

LMR also provides training to include contract interpretation and implementation, rights and responsibilities under the labor statute, pre-decisional involvement, partnership principles, interest-based bargaining, joint problem solving, and dispute resolution.

Finally, LMR ensures that labor-management goals and objectives are linked to the Department's Strategic Plan and that measures are developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the labor relations program as it relates to the mission of improving services and creating a positive work environment for employees.

POINT OF CONTACT: *Isabel Soto, Office of Human Resources & Administration (006), (202) 273-4901.*

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS



The Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs provides executive management of the Offices of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. Such management comprises coordination of the information VA communicates to its various audiences, especially to the general public through the news media, and the provision of policy guidance in public affairs. The Assistant Secretary also manages and directs the Department's intergovernmental, consumer affairs, and homeless programs. The office supports veterans specific interest groups, special events, and program activities to meet the needs of several audiences – first and foremost, veterans.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) serves as the Department's centralized communications organization, providing a range of public information products and public affairs counsel to VACO management and field facilities. OPA implements and encourages regular contact with news services, newspapers, and radio and television outlets. Routine public affairs activities include preparing news releases, broadcast announcements, and public service materials. Other services include providing the media with information on VA issues and programs, answering questions, clarifying VA policy, providing information on veterans and veterans benefits, proposing and developing news stories, and creating a better understanding of VA among the general public.

OPA produces information materials to help broaden understanding and awareness of the Department's diverse activities, such as the employee magazine *Vanguard*, the quarterly internal video *VA Report*, and the annual booklet *Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents*.

OPA staff located in VACO direct the preparation and dissemination of information on VA benefits, services, and accomplishments, as well as guidance for VA facilities on emerging issues, with the support of seven OPA regional offices which also serve as public affairs advisors to VA facilities.

OFFICE OF WHITE HOUSE LIAISON

The White House Liaison is the principal advisor to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and the Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs on the placement of top-level non-career appointments in the Department of Veterans Affairs. This Office serves as the Department's Committee Management Officer for VA's 23 advisory committees and is responsible for providing clear goals, standards, and uniform procedures with respect to the creation and operation of the advisory committees.

OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) supports the VA mission through programs supporting intergovernmental, homeless, and consumer affairs. The IGA staff is responsible for directing, managing, and coordinating intergovernmental and consumer affairs activities for the Department.

IGA acts as the Department's liaison in all intergovernmental issues and serves as the primary contact with Federal, State, and local government officials. Guided by Executive Order 12372, IGA is responsible for assessing the attitudes and concerns of these officials and the impact VA's policies and actions have on their areas of jurisdiction. IGA also facilitates, through the Veterans Liaison Service, continuous and bilateral communication between Federal and State officials and VACO on key health and benefits issues, and obtains early knowledge of State actions, concerns, and supporting programs.

IGA provides advice and support for the consumer affairs operations conducted by the Department's three administrations (VHA, VBA, and NCA) under the guidelines of Executive Order 12160. This office works closely with administration staffs in developing consumer programs for their specific clientele; acts as the Department's consumer complaint response office; is a consultant to VACO and administrations about Internet-related customer services; and serves as liaison with the other Cabinet department consumer offices and other Federal customer service offices.

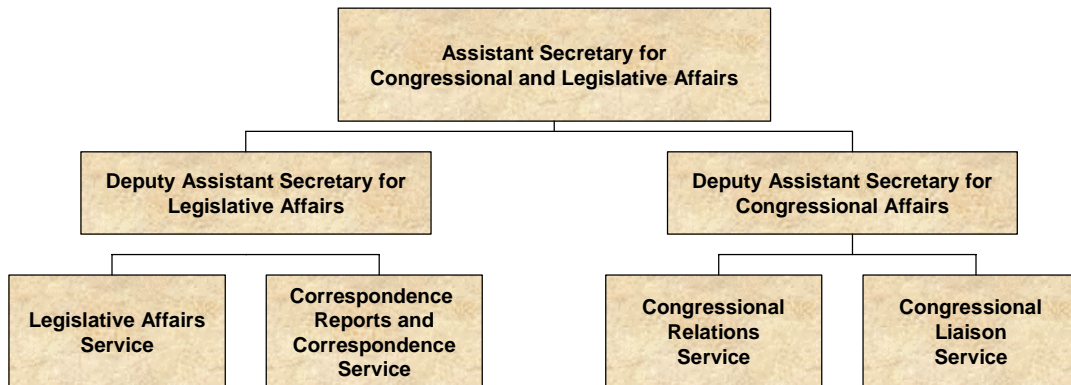
IGA provides direction and support to the Office of Homeless Veterans Programs. The office is responsible for developing partnerships with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and national/local homeless service providers to improve internal and external systems of assisting homeless veterans.

OFFICE OF NATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

This newly established office provides direction and overall management of VA's participation in memorial, commemorative, rehabilitative, and other special events (i.e., Veterans Days, Memorial Day, Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, National Veterans Wheelchair Games, National Veterans Golden Age Games, and the Creative Arts Festival.) The staff is charged with promoting and strengthening partnerships with Federal, State, and local agencies; veterans service organizations; and other veterans special interest groups involved in such activities.

POINT OF CONTACT: *Karla Pringle, Office of Public & Intergovernmental Affairs (002), (202) 273-5754.*

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS



The Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and other Department officials concerning all legislative and congressional affairs matters. The Assistant Secretary develops positive, cooperative relationships with Members of Congress and congressional committees and staff in order to accomplish the Department's goal of serving America's veterans.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

The Office of Legislative Affairs provides support and assistance to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and other Department officials with respect to specific legislative activity and is responsible for monitoring the status of pending legislation affecting VA; developing the annual legislative program; managing congressional legislative hearings; overseeing VA's compliance with issuing congressionally mandated reports; serving as a liaison with the General Accounting Office; coordinating congressional notifications on grants, regulations, awards, and other noteworthy issues; and managing the office's congressional correspondence review function.

OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS

The Office of Congressional Affairs is responsible for advising the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and other Department officials on developing and maintaining VA's relationship with Members of Congress and congressional committees, advising VA's senior leadership of congressional interest in VA policy and program development and implementation, managing congressional oversight and confirmation hearings, and ensuring that Congress receives pertinent and timely information about VA programs and policy issues. In addition, two satellite offices located in the Hart Senate Office Building and the Rayburn House Office Building provide constituent casework and related services, allowing for direct, face-to-face contact with Members of Congress and their staffs.

POINT OF CONTACT: Susan Theroux, Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (009), (202) 273-5628.